

becoming the husband of its queen. At twenty-eight, *i.e.*, in 1555, he became by his father's abdication Lord of the Netherlands and King of Spain and all the wide Spanish dominions in Italy and America. His sovereignty was not so extensive as that of his father, for the imperial dignity went to his uncle Ferdinand, but the crown of England was a counterpoise to the loss of the imperial dignity, and his sovereignty was far and away the most splendid of the age. Fortune could scarcely have been more lavish in her gifts of grandeur and power to mortal man. And this man was in most respects a strange enough mortal—already a valetudinarian, like his prematurely old father, a lover of solitude and secrecy, selfish, cold, suspicious, taciturn, ill at ease, incapable of feeling or inspiring affection, except in the inner circle of his family, let alone enthusiasm. "He was," says Suriano, "little liked by the Italians, most repugnant to the Flemings, hateful to the Germans." Such a man could not, try as he might—and he did occasionally try when absolute necessity made trying imperative—adapt himself or his policy to gain the love or serve the interests of his Netherland subjects. He could not even speak their language; he disliked their sprightly, festive ways. To him they could never be other than foreigners, their country more than a Spanish province. Estrangement, repulsion, was the only result of contact. The Netherlands had profited commercially from the Spanish connection under Charles V. The products of America were transported from Spanish ports to the northern seas in Dutch and Flemish ships. Antwerp became the great shipping and commercial centre of the world. But the people had never liked the Spaniards, and they detested the idea of Spanish dominion as incorporated in Philip. There certainly was no love lost between sovereign and subjects when he made over the task of governing the Netherlands to his natural sister, Margaret of Parma, and set sail for Spain in August 1559. Philip went; the Spanish soldiery, whom he would fain have left in permanence, he was forced by the insistence of the Estates to promise to withdraw within a few months. But he left in the hands of the regent and her "Consulta" a well-defined policy. They were to govern the Netherlands in the interest of Spain, and that too with a high hand, irrespective of the